National Library of Canada

Acquisitions and Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.

Canada

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE ROLE OF THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT HEAD

by

SHIRLEY E. SIMPSON ©

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1992

National Library of Canada
Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

Canadian Theses Service
Service des thèses canadiennes

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-315-77226-3

Canada

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR: Shirley Evelina Simpson

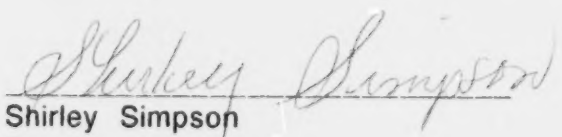
TITLE OF THESIS: The Role of the English Department Head

DEGREE: Master of Education

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED: 1992

Permission is hereby granted to the University of Alberta to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves all other publication and other rights in association with the copyright in the thesis, and except as hereinbefore provided neither the thesis nor any substantial portion thereof may be printed or otherwise reproduced in any material form whatever without the author's prior written permission.



Shirley Simpson
Box 73
Wandering River, Alberta
T0A 3M0

October 8, 1992

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled THE ROLE OF THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT HEAD submitted by Shirley E. Simpson in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

M Haughey

Dr. Margaret Haughey

Supervisor

K Lee Ward

Dr. K. Ward

M L Iveson

Dr. M. Iveson

Date: September 29, 1992

ABSTRACT

This study attempted to provide a profile of the role of the senior high English department head as it is perceived by the teachers who fill that role in one school district in Alberta. Based on a review of the literature and the conceptual framework, the research question was divided into five main areas of investigation, each of which contained a number of sub-problems.

A combination of questionnaire and interview was used to collect data for this study. The questionnaire was used to collect demographic data. The interview was semi-structured and organized around the five main areas of investigation. Each interview was taped as a precaution against the loss of valuable details. Each of the interviews was transcribed and coded to identify the major topic areas discussed. The data were then reorganized on the basis of topic area. This allowed all the responses dealing with a particular point to be analyzed for patterns, similarities, differences or perhaps the absence of any commonality.

Major conclusions of the study were:

1. It is apparent that the role of the English department head lacks definition. Some department heads indicated that they would not perform duties which others claimed were part of their job description. Department heads indicated that they had positive relationships with their administrators. However, it seems that principals are not making full use of department heads in their efforts to act as instructional leaders.

2. The grade 12 diploma examination exerts considerable influence on the instruction and evaluation of students within the English department.
3. English department heads were not comfortable with their role in teacher evaluation. The majority of the department heads were willing to perform formative evaluation, but concern was expressed that doing summative evaluations could destroy the atmosphere of collegiality within the department.
4. Department heads felt that in-service opportunities for teachers were a low priority in the district.
5. The budget formation process within the English department is not carried out in a uniform manner within the district.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer expresses her gratitude to the following people whose time, effort and support contributed to the completion of this thesis:

To my thesis advisor, Dr. M. Haughey, for her interest, patience and guidance.

To Dr. K. Ward and Dr. M. Iveson who served as committee members, for their time, patience and valuable advice.

To my husband, Donald Chrysanthou, for his understanding, support and encouragement.

To my children for their patience while this thesis was being completed.

To all the English department heads who took the time to participate in this study.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION....1

Conceptual Framework....2

Organization of the Thesis....3

Statement of the Problem....4

Definition Of Terms....5

Rationale for the Study....6

Delimitations....8

Assumptions....8

Limitations....8

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE....9

Importance of the Position....9

Role of the Department Head....12

Specific Duties of Department Heads....14

Chapter Summary....22

Chapter III

RESEARCH DESIGN....24

Respondents....24

Instrument....25

Collection of Data....26

Analysis of the Data....26

Validity and Reliability....27

Ethics....27

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS 28

Demographic Information 28

Gender 28

Age 29

Teaching Experience 29

Teaching Experience in High School 29

Years in Current School 29

Experience As Department Head 30

Post-graduate Education 30

Training For Departmental Duties 31

Profile Of Departments 31

Size of Department 31

Clerical Help 32

Department Meetings 32

Organization of Instructional Time 32

The Role of the English Department Head 33

Role And Relationship 33

How did teachers who filled the position summarize their role as English Department Head? 33

What were the primary responsibilities English Department Heads listed for their position? 34

Written Job Descriptions 37

As Department Head, what was the working relationship with the Principal and Assistant Principal(s) 38
To what extent were department heads involved with community relations? 40
What was the most serious continuing obstacle English department heads faced in their efforts to be effective in their position? 41
Summary 43
Curriculum And Program Development 43
How do Department Heads work with teachers in planning? 43
What is the role of Department Heads regarding the coordination of teaching? 46
Summary 47
Personnel 47
How did department heads influence the teachers in the English department? 47
How did department heads encourage the teachers in the English department to do periodic self-evaluation? 50
Did the duties of department heads include formative evaluation of the teachers in the English department? 51

Did the duties of department heads include summative evaluation of the teachers in the English department? 52
What was the role of department heads with regard to in-service opportunities for the staff of the English department? 53
Summary 54
Students 55
What was the role of department heads with regard to students? 55
What was the role of department heads regarding the coordination of the evaluation of student performance within the English department? 57
Summary 58
Resources 58
To what extent were department heads involved in budget development at the school level? 59
How did department heads develop the budget for the English department? 61
What was the role of department heads with regard to the materials in the resource centre of the English department? 62
Summary 64
Chapter Summary 64
Demographic Information 64

Profile of Departments....65
Role of the Department Head....65
Role and Relationships....65
Curriculum and Program Development....66
Personnel....66
Students....66
Resources....66
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS....68
Summary....68
Purpose of the Study....68
Problem....68
Sample....70
Instrumentation....70
Collection of Data....71
Analysis of the Data....71
Review of Major Findings....72
Role and Relationship....72
How did teachers who filled the position summarize their role as English department head?....72
What were the primary responsibilities English department heads listed for their position?....72
As department head, what is the working relationship with the principal and assistant principal(s)?....73

To what extent were department heads involved with community relations? 73
What was the most serious continuing obstacle English department heads faced in their efforts to be effective in their position? 73
Curriculum and Program Development 73
How do department heads work with teachers in planning? 73
What is the role of department heads regarding the coordination of teaching? 74
Personnel 74
How did the department head influence the teachers in the English department? 74
How did department heads encourage the teachers in the English department to do periodic self-evaluation? 75
Did the duties of department heads include formative evaluation of the teachers in the English department? 75
Did the duties of department heads include summative evaluation of the teachers in the English department? 75
What was the role of department heads with regard to in-service opportunities for the staff of the English department? 75
Students 76

What was the role of department heads with regard to students? 76
What was the role of department heads regarding the coordination of the evaluation of student performance within the English department? 76
Resources 76
To what extent were department heads involved in budget development at the school level? 76
How did department heads develop the budget for the English department? 77
What was the role of department heads with regard to the materials in the resource centre of the English department? 77
Description and Analysis of Findings 77
Role and Relationship 78
Curriculum and Program Development 79
Personnel 79
Students 80
Resources 81
Conclusions 81
Recommendations 83
Implications for Further Study 84
APPENDIX 85
Bibliography 86
Questionnaire 91

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1
The Role of the Department Head.....20

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the early 1800s, European settlement in what was to become the Canadian West was generally limited to men. They married native women and their children grew up in a culture in which formal schooling was unknown. Favorable reports regarding the West eventually drew more and more settlers, farmers who brought their families with them.

As society began to develop in the West, it mirrored that which had been left behind in many ways. One of these was the perceived need for schools. Initially, schools were small affairs. They generally occupied a single room in which one teacher taught all of the students at all the grade levels. Gradually, as the west changed, schools changed more or less to reflect these changes in society. They became larger to accommodate a growing population and more complex as more programs were added in an attempt to satisfy the demands made by society. In reference to education, the impact of World War I was felt first in the demand to provide schooling to grade twelve, and then in the number of teachers required to teach grades 1 to 12.

As schools grew and changed, the duties and responsibilities of the head teacher or principal also changed. Less of their time was available for instruction as they spent more and more of their day engaged in administrative concerns.

The increasing demands on their time necessitated the introduction of new administrative, supervisory and teaching

positions, particularly in the senior high schools, in order that principals could discharge their responsibilities; the primary one being the operation of the school.

One such position was that of department head. This position involved responsibility for the coordination of curriculum in a specific subject area.

While the provision of a department head may allow the principal to delegate responsibilities for curriculum or staff supervision, the parameters of the role of department head remain ambiguous. A review of studies by Jones (1988), Knox, Laird and Vichert (1977), and Clark (1969) indicates that this ambiguity has not changed in roughly two decades. Questions therefore arise with regard to the responsibilities of the department head position. Hord (1984) states that ". . . for certain, a great deal more investigation is needed to provide illumination about the management of high school change and improvement efforts and how it may be done most effectively. (p. 15) For example, how do department heads reconcile supervisory and collegial roles? Hence, the focus of this study is the role of the department head.

Conceptual Framework

Appointed to chair a subject department, department heads may be expected to involved themselves in a variety of different tasks and roles which relate directly to the operation of their particular department and may have repercussions on the school as a whole. More specifically, a department head may be asked to operate in the following circumstances:

1. The department head is expected to have subject matter expertise and may be expected to act as a consultant to other staff on all matters of curriculum.
2. The department head may also be expected to be knowledgeable about appropriate teaching strategies and be able to work with and advise teachers about teaching.
3. The department head may be involved in writing formative and summative evaluations regarding teachers.
4. Because the department head is required to handle all curriculum matters there may be an administrative aspect to the role.
5. In schools with decentralized budgets department heads may be required to work out and administer yearly budgets.
6. Department heads may work directly with students who wish to register or withdraw from courses in their subject area.

The study will explore the role of the department head in relation to these six major areas.

Organization of the Thesis

The background, conceptual framework and rationale have been presented in relation to the research questions in chapter 1. Chapter 2 contains the review of literature while the methodology of the study is described in chapter 3. Following the description of the findings in chapter 4, the analysis of and reflections regarding the findings are presented in chapter 5 with recommendations for future research.

Statement of the Problem

This study attempted to provide a profile of the role of the senior high English department head as it is perceived by the teachers who fill that role in one school district in Alberta. Based on a review of the literature, and the conceptual framework, the research question was divided into five main areas of investigation, each of which contained a number of sub-problems. They were as follows:

1. Role And Relationships
    - 1.1 How did teachers who filled the position summarize their role as English department head?
    - 1.2 What were the primary responsibilities English department heads listed for their position?
    - 1.3 As department head, what was the working relationship with the Principal and Assistant Principal(s).
    - 1.4 To what extent were department heads involved with community relations?
    - 1.5 What was the most serious continuing obstacle English department heads faced in their efforts to be effective in their position?
2. Curriculum/Program Development
    - 2.1 How do department heads work with teachers in planning?
    - 2.2 What is the role of department heads regarding the coordination of teaching?
3. Personnel
    - 3.1 How did department heads influence the teachers in the English department?

3.2 How did department heads encourage the teachers in the English department to do periodic self-evaluation?

3.3 Did the duties of department heads include formative evaluation of the teachers in the English department?

3.4 Did the duties of department heads include summative evaluation of the teachers in the English department?

3.5 What was the role of department heads with regard to in-service opportunities for the staff of the English department?

4. Students

4.1 What was the role of department heads with regard to students?

4.2 What was the role of department heads regarding the coordination of the evaluation of student performance within the English department?

5. Resources

5.1 To what extent were department heads involved in budget development at the school level?

5.2 How did department heads develop the budget for the English department?

5.3 What was the role of department heads with regard to the materials in the resource centre of the English department?

Definition Of Terms

The following definitions are used throughout this study:

Department A sub-system of a school consisting of those teachers who teach a particular subject specialty.

Department Head A member of the high school teaching staff who, in addition to performing the usual duties of teaching in a subject department, has also been assigned other responsibilities for administering the affairs of the department; this may include supervising the teachers of the department.

Coordinator, Head and Department Chair are used synonymously with the term Department Head in this study.

English Department Head The person responsible for those areas defined under the term "department head," with respect to the subject of English.

Senior High School A secondary school offering instruction to students in grades 10, 11 and 12.

Rationale for the Study

The major purpose of this study was to develop a descriptive profile of the English department head in senior high schools. Jones (1988) suggested,

> We recognize that instructional leadership comes from a variety of sources, and is not invested entirely in the role of the principal; it may be that other people within a school may be more able than principals to influence student achievement. In particular, given the departmental organization common to secondary schools, utilizing the expertise of departmental chairs may be the best way in which principals can influence student achievement. (p.7)

Goodlad (1984) recommended that head teachers or as Rallis and Highsmith (1986) called them, developmental leaders be hired or identified to provide instructional leadership. Jones (1988) added that "the training and skills needed to manage a school are quite different from those needed to provide instructional leadership (p. 7)."

In a study completed in 1988, Jones, citing Hord and Murphy (1985), states,

> The role of the department chair has not been the target of much investigation, and what little research exists has been carried out mostly in colleges and universities making the application of findings to secondary schools difficult. . . . Consequently, the role is not understood and lacks definition. (p. 7)

It would appear at this time that a descriptive study of the department head is justified.

Clark, who completed her study in 1969 found no evidence of a major research study on the position of department head since 1958. By comparing the results of this study with those obtained by Clark in her 1969 study of the role of the department head, educational administrators will be able to see what, if any, changes have occurred over time. Such a comparison could be useful in helping principals identify methods for enhancing the role of the English department head. Further research into why these changes have or have not occurred could provide educational administrators with positive direction for making more effective and efficient use of their English department heads.

Delimitations

This study was delimited to senior high school English department heads in one school system. Its findings may not be applicable to other departments or to other jurisdictions.

Assumptions

1. There are sufficient commonalities to be able to define the role of the department head.

Limitations

1. Despite the researcher's effort to develop a supportive environment for the interview, the information given by the participants might have been selective or incomplete.
2. Ambiguity of terms or lack of clarity of the responses in the open-ended questions may have resulted in errors in qualitative analysis by the researcher.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature associated with the position of department head. The chapter is divided into two sections which outline the position's importance to secondary school administration and possible roles associated with the position. Although most high schools in North America have department heads, there is little research or literature in this area.

Importance of the Position

A number of writers have identified benefits associated with the allocation of department heads. Jones (1988) suggests

> . . . we recognize that instructional leadership comes from a variety of sources and is not invested entirely in the role of the principal. It may be that other people within a school may be more able than principals to influence student achievement directly. In particular, given the departmental organization common to secondary schools, utilizing the expertise of department chairs may be the best way in which principals can influence student achievement. (p. 7)

Jones (1988) adds that "the training and skills needed to manage a school are quite different from those needed to provide instructional leadership." (p. 7) In her conclusion she reiterates that ". . . principals who wish to influence curriculum and instruction may be wise to engage the expertise and energies of their department chairs." (p. 8)

Callahan (1971) made the following observation with regard to the importance of departmental heads or chairs.

> . . . the departmental head, occupying a position which links administration and teachers, plays a vital role in the operation of his school. . . . chairmen can become potent forces for good within their schools. As such, they will prove to be invaluable assistants to administrators in the work of improving the personnel and instructional programs in those schools. (pp. 24-25)

Neagley and Evans (1980) offer support by quoting another statement made by Callahan in which he states

> Regardless of the title of the position or the procedure used in selecting the individual to fill the post, the department head can be valuable to the supervisory program. (p. 140)

Leithwood and MacLean (1987) point out in their study which was done in Ontario that

> Secondary schools are primary targets for reform at present. One positive consequence of this has been an escalation of efforts to better understand the nature of secondary schools and processes that are likely to lead to improvement. Results of Louis' (1986) recent study of improvement efforts in urban high schools offers a compelling argument for stimulating individual secondary schools to change and providing them with appropriate assistance. . . . Such school based control of change processes depends heavily for its success on the skill of school leaders in managing change. (p. 32)

They go on to highlight the unique skills and expertise which department heads have and which can be used to enhance such change efforts.

> Furthermore, the potential for fostering such change through leadership exercised by department heads is evident in the numbers of department heads in many secondary schools, their specialized curricular knowledge, and their cultural proximity to teachers. It is also evident in the value attached to the work of department heads by secondary principals. (p. 32)

In light of the importance which can be placed on the department head, it might seem logical to find that a considerable amount of research has been done on this topic.

This was not the case in 1972 when Grey (1972) in his master's thesis cites Clark (1969) who said "Educational research into the position of the high school department head has been very limited in the United States and almost non-existent in Canada" (p. 25). Ten years later, Marland (1981) points out that little work has been done.

> It is clear that insufficient attention has been paid by researchers and students of educational administration, by providers of in-service training, and by those responsible for career development in schools, to the needs of heads of departments. (p. 2)

At the University of Alberta's Herbert T. Coutts Library most of the material related to the position of department head concerned either university or college positions or was from Great Britain. Jones (1988) found a similar situation as did Hord and Murphy (1985)

> The role of the department chair has not been the target of much investigation, and what little research exists has been carried out mostly in colleges and universities making the application of findings to secondary schools difficult. . . . Consequently, the role is not understood and lacks definition. (p. 7)

Some attempts have been made to apply the findings of studies conducted at colleges and universities to high school. Hord and Murphy (1985) point to Marcial (1984) and Sergiovanni (1984) as researchers who have made such attempts. They caution however, that

> . . . because of contextual differences, institutions of higher education findings may not be directly applicable to high schools. Among the observable differences between institutions of higher education and high schools are community expectations, contractual limitations, and the nature of the student body. (p.4)

Role of the Department Head

Regarding the role of the department head, Hord and Murphy (1985) make the following observation

> The most appropriate characterization of the department head role is its inconsistency in the way it is operationalized across heads within a school, within a district, and across all the districts we have studied. We have found great variability. . . . (p. 8)

Peter Ribbins (1988) has collected information from a number of sources, all of which deal with the uncertainty surrounding the position of department head. He cites Best, Jarvis and Ribbins (1977; 1980; 1983) who have

> . . . questioned whether such accounts [sic. of the role of the middle manager] too often tend to confuse what ought to happen with what does, in that despite the growth of interest in the topic, far too little systematic, empirical or theoretical research has taken place. (p. 67)

Lambert (1975) also found such data lacking, noting

> . . . that we do not really know much about what expectations middle managers have of their roles or what others in schools expect of them. (p. 67)

Similarly, Ribbins cites Thomas (1983) who wrote

> . . . that the kinds of expectations to be found in much of the literature are utopian and/or involve a conception of the middle manager as 'paragon'. (p. 67)

In analyzing the role of department heads, Hall and Guzman (1984) state that surprisingly

> . . . department heads in most instances are not prime movers for change and do not typically facilitate implementation. With rare exceptions department heads are primarily passers of information, orderers of books and maintainers of inventories. In general, they are not serving as leaders and facilitators of change. . . . (pp. 10-11)

Hall and Guzman (1984) also maintain ". . . the primary key to department heads being effective change facilitators appears to be related to how the principal defines their role. . . . If principals have higher expectations, then the department heads seem more as level managers" (p. 12). They go on to state

> It appears that much will have to be done to define the role, select promising persons to fill the role and provide them with related training, support, incentives and opportunity before they can become effective change facilitators in any sort of large scale change efforts. (p. 13)

Although Hall and Guzman (1984) blame individuals for their lack of motivation, Ribbins (1988) suggests that there are alternative explanations. He quotes Siddle (1978, p. 4):

> . . . there are wide variations in the extent to which department heads are exercising their responsibilities. In some cases inadequate action is the result of failure to appreciate the extent to which responsibilities have multiplied and increased in importance. . . . (p. 67)

Ribbins supports this observation with Dunham's 1978 survey of 92 heads of department which suggested "that the middle managers of today face a greater possibility of stress and role conflict than did their historical predecessors" (p. 67).

This is further supported by Torrington and Weightman (1989) who state

> The main task of department heads was to maintain or improve the school's success in external examinations. Times have changed. The new Head has been trying to open the minds of his Heads of Department to the need to manage staff as well as organize and administer departmental resources. He (sic) has also encouraged them to take initiatives rather than orders and plan in terms of collaborating teams rather than individuals alone in their classrooms. (p. 167)

Specific Duties of Department Heads

The literature that is available on the topic of department heads illustrates that there is considerable variation in the job descriptions for the position as well as in the associated duties and responsibilities.

Callahan (1971) states

> . . . a logical way to begin the task of assessing a department head's achievements is by determining at the outset just what is expected of him. Unless a chairman's duties are clearly defined. . . his work may suffer as much from lack of perspective as from any lack of ability on his own part. (p. 25)

Neagley and Evans (1980) quote Jones, Salisbury and Spencer (1969) who said

> The role of the department head varies considerably in secondary schools. Some department head's functions are limited to compilation of budget requests from department members. Others may be granted a much broader role which includes supervision. Regardless of the type of role the structure of the school suggests for department heads, their purpose is the same--improvement of the instructional program. (p. 140)

Leithwood and MacLean (1987) provide a description of what a department head does in terms of how he or she handles the job. They state, in effect, that the capability of the department head dictates what he or she is able to do.

> Factors are those aspects of the classroom and school which are experienced directly by students and which influence what they learn. Heads accomplish their goals to the extent that they are able to shape these factors. Reviews of teacher and school effectiveness literature, as well as our parallel research on the principal's role, identified seventeen such factors which either heads or principals are capable of influencing. Such factors include, for example, the instructional behaviors of teachers, forms of assessment and reporting to students, the quality of interpersonal relations between staff and students, and the co-curricular program. As heads become more effective, in part because of the nature of their goals, they attempt to influence most factors--at least in the long run. . . . Less effective heads never address the whole range of factors; indeed, the least effective heads devote their full attention to just materials and resources, subject content covered in class, and classroom management. Highly effective heads also have quite specific expectations regarding desirable practices in the case of each factor. (p. 33)

Ribbins (1988), commenting on changes in the role of the department head in Great Britain, outlined a range of duties for department heads which included "curriculum; supervision of staff; organization of the department; communications; and finances" (p. 65).

In a Canadian study, Knox, Laird and Vichert (1977) listed the duties of the department head and included "Teacher-Exemplar; Leader of the Department; Evaluation of Teaching Performance; Member of Management Team; Member of the Staff; and Department Spokesman" (p. 2).

Neville (1990) provides a list of the qualities required of a department head which was the result of a Heads of Department meeting in 1989. This list, compiled by department heads, includes everything that participating department heads thought that a good department head should have, be or be concerned with.

1. Contact with non-teaching staff
2. Optimism/ Enthusiasm
3. Realism
4. Appearance
5. Approachability/communication--staff/pupils/parents
6. Organizer/leader
7. Ability to delegate
8. Democratic/good listener
9. Good teacher
10. Innovator
11. Credibility/expertise in field
12. Energetic/dynamic/hardworking
13. Up-to-date/current issues
14. Supportive/staff development
15. Ability to spot strengths/weaknesses
16. Sense of Humor
17. Consistency/fair
18. Crisis manager
19. Positive (pro-active) not merely reactive. (p. 4)

On analysis, these qualities cluster under headings. One set deals with the personality of the department head as optimistic and enthusiastic; another set refers to leadership qualities as organizer, delegator and innovator; the third set is based on communicator skills and the fourth stresses qualities related to teaching and staff development. These qualities could as easily refer to the principal. They do not seem to highlight any particular role for the department head.

Nonetheless, the challenges of the position are serious.

Marland and Hill (1981) cite Phipson and Boyne-Jardine who stated that "the head of department requires intellectual, administrative and human relationship skills of a high order" (p.2).

Torrington and Weightman (1989) support this statement by pointing out

> The job of Head of Department or faculty is not just the administrative tasks that job specifications tend to enumerate. Heads of Departments influence how the adults in the school work together. . . . Whether the Head of Department is conscious of doing so or not, teachers in departments will experience the culture, resources, control, co-ordination valuing, participation and change of the school most directly and immediately through the ways the Heads of Department manage and organize departmental affairs. (p. 163)

Marland and Hill (1981) offered their own list detailing the duties of the department head. This list includes:

1. Structure the departmental team, utilizing the flexibility of the responsibility post system to create a cogent internal structure.
2. Take a major part in appointing teachers.
3. Deploy teachers in a way which is consistent with their strengths and weaknesses and their career development--as well as fulfilling the needs of the school.
4. Monitor teachers' work.
5. Assist the development of teachers' professional skills, both as required by the school, and to assist their own growth for the future.
6. Contribute to the initial training of student teachers on teaching practice.
7. Take a part in the planning of the school's overall curriculum, and lead the planning of the curriculum within the department.
8. Oversee the work of the pupils, from the monitoring of their progress, through disciplining and encouraging, to reporting.
9. Manage the finances, physical resources, and learning materials efficiently.

10. Assist in the overall leadership of the school. (p. 2)

It should be noted that both Marland and Hill and Torrington and Weightman are referring to British department heads. The most comprehensive list of duties for a department head according to Yanitski (1988), was Sergiovanni's who listed 30 duties for the position (in no particular order):

1. Evaluate teachers
2. Make out requisitions
3. File purchase orders
4. Approve invoices
5. Take inventory
6. Submit budget requests
7. Approve conference and travel requests
8. Recommend teachers for summer school
9. Attend administrative meetings with the principal
10. Recommend textbooks for adoption
11. Serve on in-service institute committees
12. Submit "end of year" departmental report
13. Participate in "opening of school" activities
14. Recommend curriculum revisions
15. Serve on negotiation committees
16. Make oral reports at board of education meetings
17. Participate in parental conferences
18. Make sure teachers in department turn in report cards
19. Interview prospective teachers
20. Attend "open house" activities in a leadership role
21. In multi-high school districts, coordinate with other chairpersons
22. Assist guidance department in preparing orientation booklets
23. Advise teachers on disciplinary cases
24. Sit in as a representative on grievances filed
25. Be involved in activities sponsored by State High School Association
26. Subscribe to professional journals in subject area
27. Advise librarian on books and periodicals needed for resource materials
28. Insure a procedure for audio-visual equipment use in the department

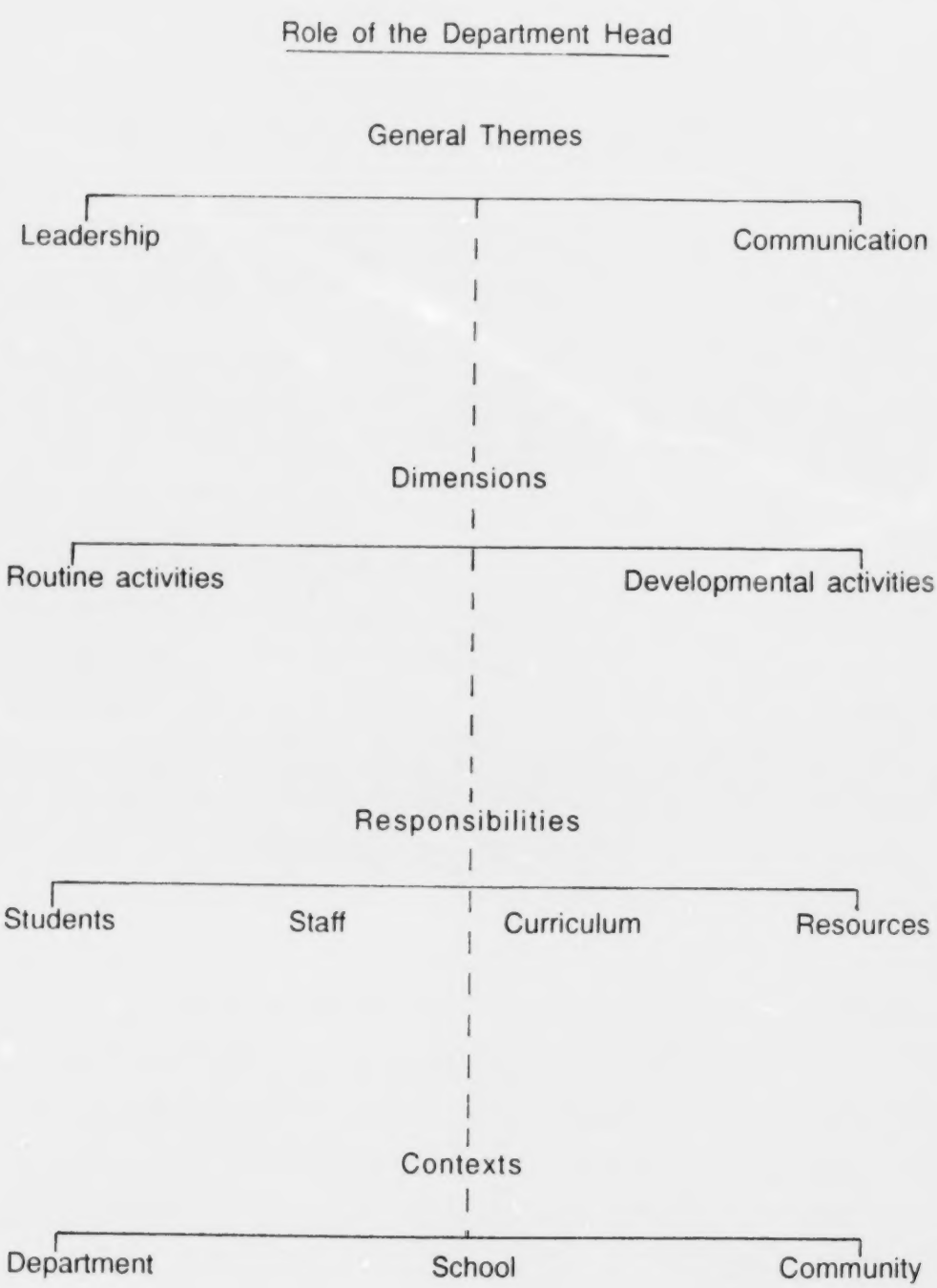
29. Design key system accounting for special lab desks, filing cabinets, equipment in the department
30. Check over lesson plan books if used in the school. (pp.12-13)

Early and Fletcher-Campbell (1989), drawing heavily on the work of Edwards (1987), also provide a comprehensive overview of the duties of the department head. They used a diagram to attempt to explain "the integration of tasks and functions as reflected in the reality of department headship and as shown by the observational data" (p. 43). Figure 2.1 is adapted from Early and Fletcher-Campbell's work.

Early and Fletcher-Campbell identified two general themes, Leadership and Communication, on which which the work of the department head is centred. They suggested that a head of department is supposed to lead by inspiration and by modelling that doing a worthwhile job is not impossible. In reference to communication, heads of department need to keep their staff informed of developments in the area of curriculum and with regard to the operation of the school in general. The activities of a head of department are one of two types: routine, including daily tasks which must be performed for the operation of the department, and developmental, including specialized tasks that enhance departmental operations.

They then list four main areas of responsibility. With regard to students, the chairs are responsible for organizing, monitoring and assessing student progress. They may be involved in all aspects of the work done by both teachers and support staff within the department including hiring, deployment and professional

Figure 2.1
The Role of the Department Head
(adapted from Edwards, 1987, p. 43)



development. In the area of curriculum, they are responsible for all educational experiences provided by the department, including planning learning experiences, defining objectives and evaluating the department's progress towards its goals. The fourth responsibility, resources, encompasses selection and utilization of learning materials.

The department head must operate in three separate contexts which may, from time to time, overlap. In the first context they must operate as leaders, guides and managers within the department which is a distinct unit within the school. Within the school as a whole they must provided for communication between their departments and others while contributing to the implementation of policies at the school level. In the third context heads of department act as a public relations officer between the school and the community.

Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989) go on to provide a summation of department heads and the work they do.

> Their work, like that of their senior management counterparts, tended to be characterized by fragmentation and involved them in a myriad of social interactions with both adults and pupils. Department and faculty heads were 'busy' people and tasks that involved long, uninterrupted spells invariably had to be undertaken at home. Although a typical day was very full, little time was found for planning, evaluating, reflecting or observing colleagues; crisis management appeared to be much more the norm. Middle managers spoke of the difficulties and stresses of doing so many different activities at the same time, and of the need to have a 'grasshopper mind'. Reference was also made to the frustrations associated with appearing never to complete the job--there were always matters pending. (p. 43)

It should be noted that Early and Fletcher-Campbell do not include budgeting or finance in their summation of the work department heads do.

Hord and Diaz-Ortiz (1986) make two points with regard to the information available about the position of department head. They state ". . . an extraordinary gap exists in our knowledge of high school department heads. Filling this gap with careful studies is, in our view, an immediate need" (p. 32). They go on to say that "Studying then the 'fit' between the job description, the behaviors and the contextual variables will further illuminate our understanding of the department head role, its structure and operation" (p. 31).

Chapter Summary

In general, there is little research or literature concerning the department head at the secondary school level.

Although some writers list few differences in the qualities required for administrators and department heads, Jones (1988) states that ". . . the training and skills needed to manage a school are quite different from those needed to provide instructional leadership." (p. 7) This leads her to conclude that ". . . principals who wish to influence curriculum and instruction may be wise to engage the expertise and energies of their department chairs." (p. 8)

The literature suggests that any change made in leadership roles depend on the skill of school leaders in managing change.

It has also been noted that while the main task of department heads was to assure that the students did well on external examinations, times have changed, with more stress on the instructional aspect of curriculum change.

The more recent literature indicates that the thrust of the department head's role is toward the realm of middle manager to assist in the overall leadership of the school.

Chapter III

RESEARCH DESIGN

The objective of this study was to provide a profile of the role of the senior high English department head as it is perceived by the teachers who fill that role in one school district in Alberta.

In order to obtain information for this study the English Department Heads in one large school district were surveyed. A two-part survey design was chosen in order to obtain comparative demographic and professional information as well as respondents' perceptions of their own roles.

Respondents

Participants in this study were all employed by a single, large school district in the province of Alberta. Surveying in a large district ensured that there was the opportunity to obtain enough participants to conduct the study. Working within a single district gave a "reference point" which was common to all participants and eliminated the possibility of inconsistencies which might have resulted from varied circumstances experienced with a number of different employers.

Following permission from their employer, all fourteen department heads in the district were contacted by letter. The letter described the nature of the study, outlined the role that would be played by the participants and sought permission to tape their responses. Twelve of them agreed to participate in the study and two declined.

Instrument

The instrument used to collect the data was based on the Effective Schools Research Questionnaire used by Jones in 1988. Jones said that such an instrument could also be used in studying the role of the department head. It was administered in two parts.

The first and shorter part of the data collection instrument was a questionnaire, a copy of which can be found in the appendix. It consisted of fixed-response questions designed to collect demographic information. When the questionnaire was completed, the second part of the data collection, an interview with the department head, was conducted. The interview was semi-structured and organized around the five sub-problems which were identified in the problem statement in Chapter One. Because the interview was not rigidly structured, the interviewer was able to follow up on points which may not have been included in the interview but arose in the course of discussion. The questions asked by the researcher were written down to ensure that the same questions were asked of each department head. These questions were piloted to ensure their appropriateness and to develop the interviewing technique of the researcher.

A journal was kept during the interview process to ensure that any important thoughts and impressions were not lost. Entries were added after each interview.

A copy of the questions asked during the interview is included in the appendix.

Collection of Data

Completion of the questionnaire and the interview occurred on a single occasion for each of the department heads. Arrangements were made to meet with each department head at a time that they indicated to be convenient. Most interviews took place in school either during school hours or after school. One of the interviews was done during the evening in the home of the department head. In each case the participant completed the questionnaire and then the interview was conducted. All interviews took place over a three week period.

Each department head was asked to complete a questionnaire which sought demographic information about the department head's education and experience and about the school they worked in. Most participants completed the questionnaire in less than ten minutes. Interviews were conducted as soon as the questionnaire was completed. Each interview lasted between one and two hours and was taped as a precaution against the loss of valuable details in a large amount of information.

Analysis of the Data

Since there were fairly small numbers involved in this study, the calculations involved in analysis of the questionnaire were done by hand.

Each of the interviews was transcribed and coded to identify the major topic areas discussed. The data were then reorganized on the basis of topic area. This allowed all the responses dealing with

a particular point to be analyzed for patterns, similarities, differences or perhaps the absence of any commonality.

Validity and Reliability

Data were collected from one specific group of department heads. The questions used to collect the data were standard for each participant and had been piloted. Participants in the pilot study included a person from the central office of the district involved in the study who was responsible for department heads, a former English department head working at central office and a teacher who held the position of English department head in another district. Department heads taking part in the study had the opportunity to add information that went beyond the scope of the original questions.

Ethics

All of the ethical considerations demanded by the University of Alberta and the Department of Education Administration were observed. None of the questions in the questionnaire asked the participant to provide any information which could have been used to identify them. During the transcription of the interviews the comments made were sanitized by removing references to people, places or events which might have allowed the identification of the source.

All participants in this study were aware that their participation was voluntary and that they could choose to withdraw from the study at any time.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the data which were obtained to answer the major research question "What is the role of the English department head in senior high schools as perceived by the teachers who fill that position in one school district in Alberta?". Demographic information is presented first. These data were obtained using a questionnaire which was completed by each of the department heads who participated in the study.

The information obtained during the interviews presents a picture of English department heads as they perceive themselves. Much of the material presented is in the form of direct quotations from the participants.

This information was obtained through interviews with each of the participating department heads. Each interview was transcribed from tape. The transcripts were analyzed and the information was reorganized on the basis of the specific sub-problems.

The closing of a set of quotation marks and the opening of another set indicates a different participant is being quoted.

Demographic Information

The following section provides information on the respondents and their departments.

Gender

Six of 12 respondents were female and six were male.

Age

One department head was less than 30 years of age. Three department heads were in their thirties, five were in their forties and three were between 51 and 60 years of age.

Teaching Experience

Most department heads interviewed brought at least a decade of teaching experience to the position. Exactly 25% of the respondents had up to 15 years of experience as a teacher and a further 33% had between 16 and 20 years of experience. The remaining 42% of the department heads had more than 20 years of teaching experience with 17% of those having more than 26 years of teaching to their credit.

Teaching Experience in High School

Analysis of the amount of high school teaching experience of the respondents revealed that not all teaching experience was gained at the high school level. One department head indicated only one year of high school teaching experience. Other department heads had at least five years of high school teaching and two had over 21 years of teaching at the high school level.

Years in Current School

Responses of the department heads were examined in terms of the number of years they had spent in the high school in which they currently held their positions. Fifty-eight percent of the department heads indicated that they had spent fewer than eight

years in their current school. Of these, 42% had been in their present school for less than four years. The remaining 42% who indicated that they had been in their schools for more than eight years included one department head who had been in that school for 15 years.

Experience As Department Head

Analysis of the number of years of experience as a department head revealed that 42% of the department heads had three or fewer years of experience in the position. Twenty-five percent of the respondents indicated that they had between four and seven years of experience as department head, and a further 25% indicated experience in the eight to 12 year range. Only one English department head had more than 12 years of experience in the position.

It should be noted that of the group of eight department heads who had up to seven years of experience, 63% or five department heads had a maximum of three years' experience.

Post-graduate Education

While it might seem reasonable to expect that a teacher in the position of department head had further education credentials, the data indicated that this was not the norm. Less than half held further education qualifications. Only 17% of the department heads held graduate diplomas and 25% held the degree of Master of Education.

Training For Departmental Duties

When asked if they had had any specific training for their positions, only 17% of the respondents indicated that they had received some form of training. The remaining 83% said that they had not received any training regarding the role of the English department head.

Profile Of Departments

Size of Department

Department heads were asked to indicate the size of the English department for which they were responsible in terms of the number of teachers involved. This number included both teachers who taught full-time and those who taught part-time in the department. This was the case because even a teacher who taught but a single course must be informed of necessary information, had to be included in administrative tasks, had to conform to departmental standards and required time from the department head.

Twenty-five percent of the department heads were in schools with English departments of six or fewer teachers. A further 25% reported departments of seven to nine teachers. Thirty-three percent of the schools had between 10 and 12 teachers while the remaining 17% had more than 12 teachers involved in the teaching of English.

Clerical Help

Seventy-five percent of the English department heads reported that their departments did have some form of clerical assistance available to them. This assistance was not necessarily full-time or exclusive to the English department.

Department Meetings

All department heads questioned indicated that they held at least two department meetings per five month period. Thirty-three percent indicated that they called between two and four meetings in this of time. The remaining 67% said that they called in excess of four meetings per five month period.

Organization of Instructional Time

When asked about the organization of the program of instruction for the English departments, 66% of the department heads indicated that their departments operated on a full-year or ten month system. Twenty-five percent of the department heads reported using some mixture of semester and full-year organization. Only one department head reported using the semester system exclusively.

The combination of teaching experience, length of time in the school, and the length of time as department head were not linked to department size in any observable pattern.

The Role of the English Department Head

This study was undertaken to examine, "What is the role of the English department head in senior high schools as perceived by the teachers who fill that position in one school district in Alberta?" Data pertaining to this question are reported in this section.

The data are organized according to the five areas of investigation and their associated sub-problems which were presented in the first chapter.

Role And Relationship

This section presents information related to the various roles associated with the position of department head and the working relationships which exist between a department head and the administration of the school.

1.1 How did teachers who filled the position summarize their role as English Department Head?

When asked to summarize their roles, one department head stated that his role was minimal and that he planned to keep it that way.

All other English department heads responded that they were facilitators, helping to get things done in one way or another.

> ". . . my role is to make teaching easier for the teachers in the department. . . . "

". . . my role is one of compliance with people's wishes, arranging the process be it timetable or AV material or book material in the most advantageous way for everyone. . . "

"I think I do what has to be done to make the English department work as efficiently as possible for the teachers within it, for the teachers in our program and for the school as a whole."

Two department heads pointed to the roles of buffer and conduit.

". . . acting as the buffer between the administration and the teachers."

". . . kind of a pivot between the administration and the staff. Sort of with power flowing in both directions."

1.2 What were the primary responsibilities English Department Heads listed for their position?

When asked to identify their primary responsibilities associated with the role of English department head, all respondents perceived their role to be multi-faceted. Responses indicated responsibilities ranging from instructional-related matters to administrative concerns.

A large portion of the respondents identified curriculum and curriculum related responsibilities as their primary duties. One respondent noted,

"Curricular leadership and curricular support to the teachers within the department. I think that's probably the biggest thing that teachers within the department look to me for."

Other English department heads saw their responsibility in the area of curriculum as being mainly supervisory.

> "To see to it that the curriculum is being taught and followed."
>
> ". . . to ensure that the curriculum is being taught as well as possible."

Some English department heads saw their role as being attached in some way to the administrative structure of the school.

> ". . . I think I am the bottom end of the administrative structure. In other words, some years ago we had described to us at our central office department head meeting the fact that the department head is the representative of the principal and I tend to think that is one of my responsibilities, one of the main ones."

Perhaps growing out of the association with administration, paperwork was cited as one of the duties which had to be dealt with.

> ". . . piles of it. I mean, I realize you're recording this on tape but if this were a video, my desk is about an inch deep in paper. . . There is a ton of administrivia to look after in this role."

Budget and timetable were parts of the administrative structure which also involved the English department head.

> ". . . The financial aspect is a really large component of my job."

Personnel concerns were also identified as being within the realm of the department head. These concerns include the student personnel of the department as well as the teaching staff.

". . . I have a management responsibility that teachers within the department look to me for. If there is some kind of a management problem, whether its behavior in a teacher's classroom or a problem between a teacher and the administration that requires clarification (and that can go either way), that kind of management falls within my realm. I'm very protective of the teachers within my department, and they understand that. So a lot of things fall to me to look after for them."

Primarily, English department heads saw themselves in the role of facilitator, helping to get things done.

"I think you are a facilitator. I think you are an organizer, but I think you have to be careful that you are just an organizer, not THE organizer. English teachers are different from other teachers. They don't like to be told. . . "

"I think I do what has to be done to make the English department work as efficiently as possible for the teachers within it, for the teachers in our program and for the school as a whole. I think in the larger sense, that's what I do. Whatever needs to be done, I do."

Two department heads mentioned that they liked doing their jobs.

"I like doing this job. I guess I like to help people and in this job I feel that I can help them. My position as department head allows me to see a much broader spectrum in the school than I would normally be able to see."

> "I like what I do. I'm really quite happy here. I think I like what I do here because I feel I have an influence over how things are done."

Of the 12 respondents, all filling similar positions, no two saw their role in exactly the same light. While all were reasonably certain of what was expected of them as English department heads, and listed responsibilities related to curriculum, supervision and administration, the degree of emphasis on any particular aspect of the job differed with the individual.

Written Job Descriptions

In an attempt to clarify just what their schools or the school district might expect of their English department heads, respondents were asked if they had a written job description. Responses varied from school to school within the district. Most English department heads received their job description from their administrators. As one department head indicated,

> "It's in the teacher's manual. Talks about evaluation, insures the curriculum is being covered, that kind of thing. It is, I would think, a fairly standard one."

The idea that the job description for English department head is standard was supported by another department head who stated,

> "I was one of the originators of the department head job description which has been pretty well circulated. We started this about 15 or 16 years ago at [name of school]. I notice that the job description that seems to be showing up at various schools mirrors that original one fairly closely."

One department head indicated that he did not have a written job description.

> "We have a language arts policy for, not just the department, but for the entire school."

Other English department heads had been asked to write their own job descriptions or to alter the standard description to fit the needs of their school.

> "First of all I think your responsibilities are determined by your school. . . . My job was tailor-made by what I found when I came to this school."

1.3 As Department Head, what was the working relationship with the Principal and Assistant Principal(s).

All 12 English department heads were asked to describe their working relationships with their respective school administrators. While admitting that conflict existed, "comfortable," "mentoring," "open-spirited," "supportive," and "harmonious" were descriptors used in reference to the department head/administrator relationship.

> "First I think I could say that the relationships here are excellent. There is a lot of cooperation between the administration and the department. If I feel something is urgent, something that needs attention, I bring it to their attention and we get action if it's at all possible. If I have new ideas or new directions that I feel the department should be going, all I have to do is discuss it with them and I've had no

> difficulty getting my views across. Its a harmonious relationship, no question about that."
>
> ". . . The principal is very matter of fact, and encourages us to come in whenever we wish to talk about any problems. . . . so meetings that I have with them are generally ad hoc, rather informal and at times confidential. . . . I don't feel intimidated by any of the administration."
>
> "Good, it's very good. I'm very comfortable. It's very open, I'm very comfortable with him, well, with the entire administration. It's a very positive one. It's probably the best one I've worked with."

Reasons cited included mutual respect and trust (or belief) on the part of administration that English department heads knew what they were doing.

Most English department heads indicated that their working relationship with administration was with the assistant principal.

> "I work directly with the principal very little. I drop in and keep him posted on things. . . . I have an assistant principal that is in charge of the academic [area] so she is my direct superior. My working relationship with her is excellent. She's extremely supportive. . . . I know that she defends us when we need defending in terms of school time, budgeting and that kind of thing."

English department heads seemed to feel that any difficulties they had with administration could be worked out.

> "I've always been able to point out differences of opinion and I've always had them listened to, not always acted on, but I

really can't complain. . . I think I have won more than my share of the battles."

1.4 To what extent were Department Heads involved with community relations?

When asked about their involvement with the surrounding community responses ranged from minimal involvement to department heads that were quite involved. As one department head stated,

". . . its a part of the job I don't mind actually. Around registration for example, we hold meetings and speak briefly about what kind of courses we offer. . . . I'd be there speaking. . . informally, at open-houses or occasionally we will get a phone call. I do a lot of community relations work on a really informal basis with people in the community, people I meet that find out where I work and what I do. . . I think that part of it is under-rated."

At the other end of the spectrum are the department heads with little or no involvement.

"I didn't have to go out and recruit, I didn't have to go out and speak at junior highs. We worked on open-house, we worked on in-school activities and the administrators went out, and I thought that in some ways we could have been of assistance to them although it would have meant more work."

1.5 What was the most serious continuing obstacle English Department Heads faced in their efforts to be effective in their position?

Several factors came to light as obstacles in the path of the English department head. Time was mentioned by two of them.

> "Time. . . I find that teaching really dominates my time."
>
> "Time. That would be the single one. Trying to give the right amount of time to everything that is going on in the whole school."

Two other department heads said that paperwork was a serious problem for them.

> "Paperwork is the big one. I get physically buried by paperwork."
>
> ". . . department heads spend too much time dealing with the paperwork and not enough time reading the materials and enriching the curriculum."

Other obstacles cited were:

> "Money. Because of budget constraints. We could use more marking time, proper time for all the teachers of English. I would like to have fewer students in each English class. I would like to have secretarial help on a full-time basis. We have none now."
>
> "Constraints that are placed on us from without. Staffing is always an interesting question. When we have control over the staffing we do within the department, it works very well. Under certain circumstances we have no control or we have limited control."

"Teacher morale is low. . . We feel that the whole school is being eroded gradually by new appointments to the school. By an administration that does not get into the hallways and rarely into the classrooms."

"I think the only obstacle that one has is to try and do everything that is expected of you and once that is said, you have to make up your mind what you are NOT going to do, because you can't do it all. I think that is the most integral part there is; to decide what I will not do."

Some department heads stressed the responsibilities associated with the position.

"It is a pretty responsible position. . . [You need] a great interest in teaching in English, a great interest in promoting literature, an ability to be a good mediator, to like responsibility and to make important decisions."

"Its a task I think any teacher can grow with. . ."

One department head mentioned the stress between curriculum and administration.

"There does seem to be a problem of losing touch with the curriculum, especially in the younger grades. The administration has other things to do and they are not interested in the curriculum. It is not a problem for this school but I think it is a problem for the system."

One department head would have liked further education.

"I guess it sure would be nice to have some training, in dealing with people, departments, leadership training."

Summary

All English department heads saw their role as multi-faceted with responsibilities encompassing instructional to administrative concerns. The primary focus, however, was that of facilitator.

Most English department heads received their job descriptions from their administrators. Although admitting that some conflict was present between department heads and administrators, all felt that the relationship was positive.

Constraints which hindered the effectiveness of their headship included time, paperwork, lack of money, low teacher morale, prioritizing tasks, stress associated with the position and lack of training for the job.

Curriculum And Program Development

This section provides information related to planning for the department and to coordinating the teaching activities of the teachers operating within the department.

2.1 How do Department Heads work with teachers in planning?

The consensus of all department heads was that planning had to be carried out by the department as a whole. They also pointed out that all of the planning done by the department related to the scheduling and sequence of courses, and to supplying the basic materials for the courses offered, while planning for the delivery of a specific course was left up to the individual teacher.

Consensus about common course outlines and common expectations was favoured by the majority of English department heads. As one person elaborated,

> "I believe there are many roads to heaven and I don't fool around with a teacher and how they present their material. We developed common course outlines with common expectations. . . If Teacher A worked with the course description, worked with the course outline, was meeting the mandatory requirements. . . then I feel that that particular teacher then had his or her particular domain. They had the expertise, they had the skill, they knew their students and I felt that whatever style, if it worked, then all the better."

One of the department heads indicated the importance of knowing one's staff. This allowed a department head to have teachers in courses where they could be most effective.

> "Basically I try to work on people's strengths. . . In the process of timetabling I try to honour at least some of everyone's requests."

One English department head preferred to concentrate on working with teachers who were new to English or to the school. The rationale given was that English is a process subject rather than a content subject.

> "It doesn't much matter within the broader spectrum as long as they [English teachers] are doing the things they are supposed to cover."

Most English department heads encouraged their staff to work in groups in order to coordinate what was being taught when and by

whom because of the number of textbooks available for various units.

"We have to work in terms of the book resources that we have." Classes had to be planned so that sets of textbooks circulated from class to class during the course of the year.

Planning of courses also had to take into account the limited variety of resources available.

> "We cannot possibly provide all the books all the teachers would like, so we decide on a core of book materials. . . Then we have a supplementary group of books which teachers can requisition and use and then return."

A number of different methods of carrying out the actual planning was outlined during the course of the study. Included in these methods was the formation of committees to develop a document which sets priorities for the year under the guidance of the Alberta Curriculum Guidelines. At least one department head goes over each committee document with the members before it is presented to the rest of the English department.

Another English department head outlined the procedure of sitting down at the beginning of the year with the English department staff to establish goals and again at the end of the year to review progress. This was supplemented by irregular meetings throughout the year at which staff could discuss their concerns and any problems they were having.

2.2 What is the role of Department Heads regarding the coordination of teaching?

Common assignments, common exams and common marking, often using the grade 12 diploma examination formula and marking procedure were popular methods of ensuring that all courses end up in approximately the same place.

> ". . . we were not hard and fast in terms of common exams, and the reason for that is the availability of textbooks. . . . We have common exams at midterm break in January and in June."
>
> ". . . only the final exam. I've resisted like hell having Christmas examinations common. In the practical sense, we don't have enough [text] books. . . ."
>
> ". . . We can't do everything all at one time. . . . there were common assignments with common marking. The teachers do it on their own time and it's been quite wonderful."

One English department head explained that he created all of the final exams personally.

> "The goal is not that everything is taught every year but that by the end of grade 12 the entire high school curriculum has been taught. . . the common exam is the leveler."

In the same vein another English department head agreed,

> ". . . that much of the 'how' teachers use is left open with the synthesizing taking place on the final exam."

It appeared that the final examination sets the parameters for the course.

Summary

A variety of methods for carrying out the actual planning was mentioned but all involved some form of group effort.

All department heads were involved in the coordination of teaching efforts in some way. Teachers were encouraged to work together to plan the term, with or without the department head to coordinate their efforts. Some department heads focused on providing assistance to teachers new to the department. Common assignments, common exams and common marking often using the grade 12 diploma examination formula and marking procedure were popular methods of guiding the efforts of department staff.

Personnel

Each of the participating department heads was asked to respond to five sub-problems dealing with the personnel in the English department. These sub-problems focused on the influence of the department head within the English department, their role in the evaluation of teachers and the role played by the department head regarding in-service opportunities for their staff.

3.1 How did department heads influence the teachers in the English department?

When asked this question, the majority of the department heads responded with "by example", "consultant", "making resources available to teachers", or "don't know". Eventually all department

heads were able to respond with some way that they influenced their staff.

Two points should be made here: First, it should be noted that none of the department heads interviewed held any illusions about their degree of influence. Their basic starting point was summed up by one department head who stated at the outset of his answer,

> "I think it is a big mistake to assume any of us has a huge influence on other adults."

The second point is that all department heads believed their influence worked (when it worked) in a variety of ways. Their responses are categorized according to what they felt their strength was.

Most English department heads felt that leading by example (both within and beyond the bounds of the classroom) was the most effective method of influence.

> "I found one of the first things I had to do was to be the model teacher and to present myself in a particular way."

This sort of example is expanded by another department head who stated,

> ". . . by example, by evidence of commitment to a basic set of standards and beliefs about children, about what we teach and how we teach."

Influence through example was also used in specific situations encountered throughout the day.

> "I think lots of influence comes through example. They [teachers] give you situations, situations which have obviously disturbed them and I think it is important that they DON'T

disturb you. If they are asking for some sort of help or guidance in solving something, you give them that help in a calm manner so that it sort of diffuses things."

Another department head outlined an example wherein he/she modelled a lesson for a teacher, and summed up the results with a sentiment common to all department heads who tried to be an example: "Whether or not she benefits from it is up to her."

Improving human relations was the second technique which department heads felt was important in influencing the members of their staff. Most seemed to feel that it was important to treat staff in the proper manner.

"First of all, what all teachers need is positive feedback. My God, the public is criticizing all the time! I think to build good rapport within a department, the head should not be this grand critic but should be promoting positive rapport. There should be no feeling of division."

"I could say things like I believe in the dignity of each human being, which I do. I mean, I really like the people I work with and I try and show them that. . . . "

There were those English department heads who saw themselves exerting their greatest influence in the role of consultant.

". . . through suggesting different ideas they can try in the classroom, getting them materials, new texts to read. When they have problems, sitting down with them and trying to sort them out."

". . . I listen to what they say, I try to act as quickly as I can on

> matters that concern them or that are bothering them, that have them upset. I supply them with whatever material they need as quickly as I can lay hands on it and I show them that I am doing that. Assignments, unit plans. . . 'Try this. See how this works.' Just over coffee. 'Here is another way you could do that.' 'Have you tried thus and so?' 'Why don't you let me come in and do that with them because I have done that before?' They can sit and watch what goes on."

It was apparent that English department heads found a variety of ways to influence their staffs. Responses seemed to indicate that all the different methods which were outlined by department heads were to some extent interdependent and that no single, identifiable method was used alone or exclusively. One department head wrapped up the matter neatly by stating

> "It depends on the situation. There are a number of different strategies that can be used."

3.2 How did department heads encourage the teachers in the English department to do periodic self-evaluation?

Four English department heads indicated that self-evaluation by teachers was part of their teacher performance reviews wherein each teacher wrote down his reactions to the goals and objectives that they set at the beginning of the year.

Three department heads said that they gave "subtle hints" either through example or by introducing a new resource which might cause teachers to examine their work in an effort to fit it in.

Beyond this, there was no directive in English departments regarding self-evaluation. Most department heads felt that the impetus for self-evaluation came with the knowledge that other teachers would be looking at the quality of their work through the common marking of student assignments.

3.3 Did the duties of department heads include formative evaluation of the teachers in the English department?

When asked, "Do your duties include formative evaluations of the teachers in your department?", the participants' answers resulted in a fifty/fifty split. Of those that responded positively, two English department heads said they did it because it was part of their job descriptions. Each department head used a different method of evaluation. Some developed the measurement instrument in conjunction with their teachers. Others used a "watered-down" form similar to those used by the principal as their instrument for teacher evaluation. There were also English department heads who borrowed or drew-up their criteria from other sources.

> ". . . I'm using a particular program or system of measurement that I have modified from what I have used with student teachers because with the student teachers, it is very much formative feedback that you are providing to them."

Most English department heads told their teachers what they would be looking for prior to a class visitation. In some cases the teachers had input regarding both the form the evaluation would take and what it would focus on.

"Early in the year I sit down with the teachers on a one-to-one basis to determine goals for the year. Usually I let the teachers determine those goals for themselves. . . . They mesh their goals with their personal interests and the needs of the department. I try to make things realistic. . . . I don't want them to do anything whereby they hang themselves and they understand that. I still make sure that the goals are valuable goals. . . ."

3.4 Did the duties of department heads include summative evaluation of the teachers in the English department?

Nine of the 12 English department heads indicated that they were not involved in formal summative evaluation.

"No, and I will not. I have no responsibility for hiring and firing, and there's no way I should be placed in that position."

Several department heads, those involved in summative evaluation and those not involved, indicated that this was an area of conflict.

". . . the job description reads 'assist the assistant principal with evaluation' so for the most part he just delegates. . . I think the principal is putting more of it on me than he ought to be. I think he is trying to ease right out of it. What I really think is if it works, he will take the credit; if it fails, I will take the blame."

Another department head pointed out that the conflict over summative evaluation may be within the department head.

"I don't think you can have a truly collegial relationship with your teachers and then be asked to do this sort of thing. [On

the other hand] I feel that if anyone is going to evaluate these people it had better be me because I know the English teaching process a whole lot better than any assistant principal or someone who is not involved in it at all."

3.5 What was the role of department heads with regard to in-service opportunities for the staff of the English department?

The department heads surveyed indicated that they had a very small role with regard to in-service opportunities for their staff.

"I just advise them of in-services that are available to them and I don't really do any in-servicing except for informal methods, helping out new teachers, things like that."

Several concerns were voiced regarding in-services. The first was that sufficient funding was not always available. Some department heads indicated that they withheld money from their department budget in order to ensure funds were available for teachers to attend in-services. A second concern regarding in-servicing was the timing.

"You want to in-service teachers, get out there in September. They are really cranked up, they have gone through the boredom of the summer and now they are starting, they are almost at their freshest then. There are a million things to do at the beginning of the year, this is true, but somehow when you are doing a million, there is always room for one more."

Another concern which was mentioned was the over-all value of an in-service.

> "We have people going off to conferences and such but for the most part. . . . I suppose the operative word here is informal rather than formal. Tremendous number of staff discussions, both mandated and those that just come up when several of us are just sitting around. I find those to be immensely valuable."

This sentiment was echoed by a colleague who stated,

> "I think teachers get more from lunching with each other and saying 'Hey, I've got something that really works.' I think that is probably more beneficial than in-services."

Summary

Most department heads felt that they had some influence over the staff in their department but none had any illusions as to the degree of that influence. While there were a variety of methods for exerting influence used, leading by example was the most popular.

There was no concensus as to how to get teachers to do periodic self-evaluation.

Half of the department heads said that they were involved in doing formative evaluation but only one quarter were involved in the summative evaluation process.

None of the department heads felt they played a major role in the teacher in-service process.

Students

This section presents information supplied by department heads regarding two sub-problems which concerned the students served by their departments.

4.1 What was the role of department heads with regard to students?

When asked about their role with regard to students, department heads offered a wide range of responses. Upon examination, most of these responses fit under the heading which one respondent identified as 'student ombudsman.' In this situation the English department head may act as mentor, buffer zone or court of last appeal.

With regard to any role beyond teaching, some department heads indicated a very low level of involvement.

> ". . . they are in English 30 and they want to talk about the teacher. First thing I say when I get wind of that is 'Have you spoken to your teacher?' If they have spoken with the teacher, then I say, 'Have you spoken to the grade coordinator?' I will only be involved at the request of administration."

Most department heads however, have a considerably more active role.

> "I have to see that everybody in the school is exposed to a valid interpretation of the curriculum. I have to see that every student in the school is being evaluated fairly and consistently

> and in a number of different ways. I have to make sure that the student has a fall-back mechanism when he runs afoul of a teacher, and I have to protect teachers from the students in some cases."

Most department heads seemed to feel that their roles ran heavily to settling disputes and making decisions.

> "When there's trouble, I am the mediator. When teachers need a decision regarding evaluation or behavior within the classroom or expectations or that sort of thing. I give advice and assistance and when necessary, I make a decision."
>
> "Court of appeal for any kind of student dispute with a teacher, someone to make a decision about early leave, someone [a student] has to get away because the family is going on a trip and they want to take their exams early."

In some schools, the court of appeal or ombudsman part of the job is quite formal.

> "Part of our written policy is that if a student has an objection to a mark or something, they should feel free to take it to the department head and have it re-marked or evaluated or assessed. The students do know that the teacher is not the end, there are other roads. We give that out at the beginning of the year to the students and it only seems fair."

4.2 What was the role of department heads regarding the coordination of the evaluation of student performance within the English department?

When asked about their role regarding the co-ordination of the evaluation of student performance, all department heads indicated a variety of techniques which were used to ensure that student evaluations were fair and consistent.

> "For instance, we, as a department, have agreed that all the grade twelves will be given a copy of the scoring guide used on their final exams and that's given very early in the course so that they know part of the nature of the beast. . . . We're trying not to prepare these kids so much for the exams. . . . We have to educate them, make them familiar with things so that it's not threatening. They know what they have to do, they know how its going to be assessed."

Department heads stated that English departments engage in a great deal of double marking or exchanging of papers for marking.

> "One part of my job would be to take that paper and not only evaluate it myself but also have other teachers from that level mark it. . . . "
>
> "We have just written English 30 papers here and I switched mine with another teacher. We are always switching papers, for major exams at least."

Common exams and the common marking of exams were also seen as ways to ensure consistent evaluation.

> "We do common exams. No one teacher writes his own exams."

> "The common marking of final exams, this gives us some common ground on which all of us are evaluating students, certainly in written work."

Only one department head specifically mentioned that teachers' marks were examined during the course of the year.

> "Occasionally the administration might ask the average for such and such an class, is it accurate? I have to go back to the teacher and ask 'Why is it so high? Why is it so low?' The teacher can then point out this and this and this."

Summary

Department heads listed a variety of responsibilities with regard to students however, most of these responsibilities were related to the role of "student ombudsman." They also indicated that it was their role to ensure that student evaluation was fair and consistent and that there was an appeal process available to students.

Resources

English department heads were asked to comment on three separate questions which concerned the resources they had in their departments and how they obtained them.

5.1 To what extent were department heads involved in budget development at the school level?

The majority of the department heads in this study indicated that they felt they were fairly heavily involved in the creation of the budget at the school level. Processes seemed to be quite similar, with most involving the department head presenting some sort of a budget document to the administration or some sort of faculty council.

> "I am involved 100%. I am asked each year in about February for a budget submission which will get me into the process of negotiating with the administration over how much money I think we will need over the ensuing school year."

Other department heads used largely the same process with a faculty council.

> "I think it works pretty well. I've got to make a submission and as a group we decide whether my submission is realistic in the sense that each department head in this school makes a submission."
>
> ". . . I submit the budget to the staff council which happens to be the budget committee as well and I have to justify that budget to the staff council. Then when we find out what our [school] allocations are, and our projected enrollment, we discover whether we have to pare that budget and what line we are going to take."

Some department heads pointed out that a great deal of a school's budget is virtually pre-spent and that they have little influence in reality.

> "Where I have some freedom, I suppose, is in the SAS [supplies and sundries] part of the budget; supplies and so on. Again, we have to work with other department heads to find out exactly what is going on curriculum-wise. [Another department] is in for massive re-organization. Some of that money is coming from the Department of Education but a lot of it must come from our school budget. This automatically puts constraints on what we can and cannot do."
>
> "The involvement is to the extent that the English department is given a form indicating the different levels at which we can request money. We then write down our magic numbers but these would only be numbers concerning things like Xerox costs, paper, bits and pieces. . . . What literally happens is there is no discussion regarding the budget. At the end we are handed our budget."

A final comment from one English department head summed the matter up (for themselves) as follows:

> "I think they would like us to think we are really involved but we are not. That is not fair! We <u>are</u> consulted. We spend quite a bit of time on the budget. Realistically speaking, so much of the school's budget is fixed, going into staff, so much of it is completely out of our hands."

5.2 How did department heads develop the budget for the English department?

When asked about determining how funds will be spent within the departments, one department head said that his teachers did not concern themselves with that.

> "I find the teachers in my department don't really want to have much of a say as to how many dollars go into this object and how many go into that. They just want to know that what they want, they will be able to get."

One English department head indicated that he did the budgeting process on his own.

> "I went through the resource room, looked at the resources I had, looked at my objectives as department head, chose a small section to start with and said 'O.K., I'll focus in on two things. . . . I decided what textbooks I needed from there. I decided on what part of my objectives I could follow through on, what resources I needed."

All of the other department heads indicated that setting the budget of the English department was a matter of consensus. The process may vary from school to school.

> "I'm responsible, as the department head, for drawing up the department budget. I do that in consultation with the department. I ask them the sorts of things they want to do next year and we look at the overall school philosophy, the school objectives, we try to find out what sort of things are meeting those objectives that we would be able to carry out."

> "The English department [budget] is done through department meetings and we examine our priorities; what is it we really want next year. We start with that, supplies mostly, usually print materials. Then we have to ask about professional development, about in-services."

Variations on the theme occur in cases where staff make written requests and the budget is worked on from these. In another, the department head sets the budget and then the department members assist by suggesting modifications that they feel are needed.

In any case, all but two schools reported a budget-by-consensus approach to spending the money.

5.3 What was the role of department heads with regard to the materials in the resource centre of the English department?

English department heads suggested several ways in which they sought to add to their collection of reference and resource material. The most common of these methods included catalogues and publishers' representatives.

> "I deal with the publishers' representatives. They are reasonably generous in sending single copies or a couple of copies of whatever textbooks they have or of material that they have available. I will look at these and if I think they are worthwhile, I will buy eight or ten . . . and put one in the hands of each teacher."
>
> "I go through catalogues and talk to publishers' representatives

that come along, soliciting copies so I can get a good look at them and I give those copies to other teachers so I can find out what they think of them."

At least two department heads use the catalogues and publishers' representatives as the foundation and extend their search for material from there.

". . . material which we hear about or see through department head meetings or through meetings with publishers' representatives or when student teachers or people from the university come in. They bring all kinds of things with them from the curriculum libraries, some of it also from their professors. . . . professional magazines, they are always around for people to look at and browse through."

"I spend a lot of time with catalogues. I go out to other schools if I hear about something new that I haven't seen. I use Central Office, the consultants, to see what's new or what they recommend. I use ACCESS a lot."

Two other methods were fairly low-key.

"Every year I try to add something new in every subject area. I've been here for eight years and we've got quite a repertoire of books. . . . I will continue to do that."

"I have an aide who does most of that. She keeps a pretty close eye on what we have and what we require."

Only one department head indicated that improving the resource centre might mean more than just acquiring new texts.

"One thing I did right away when I came in two years ago was I tried to stop a very bad erosion that was happening here.

> Teachers were not as careful as they are now with getting books in and all that I had to do was tell them some of the figures of book losses . . . . sometimes a complete class set had gone missing."

Summary

Most of the department heads felt they were involved in the creation of the budget at the school level but there was some question as to their actual influence.

Developing the budget for the English department elicited a wider range of responses. Most department heads felt that the budget should be developed by concensus but some administrators did their budget work without any input from the members of their department.

In reference to improving and extending the materials in the resource centre. the most common methods included the use of catalogues and meeting with publishers' representatives.

Chapter Summary

Demographic Information

This study involved twelve department heads from a single school division in Alberta. Six of these were female and six were male. Most of them had at least five years of experience as a department head and all had a minimum of 10 years teaching experience. A majority of participants had less than eight years of

experience in their present school. Less than half of the department heads held any type of degree in education beyond the bachelor level. The majority of department heads had not had any special training related to their position.

Profile of Departments

English departments involved in this study ranged in size from fewer than six teachers to more than 12. This included both full and part-time teachers. Most of these departments received some clerical help. This help was not necessarily full-time or exclusive to the English department. All department heads in this study held departmental meetings with their teachers. The frequency of these meetings ranged from a minimum of two meetings per five month period to in excess of four meetings in the same time period. The majority of the department heads reported that their departments operated on a full-year or ten-month system.

Role of the Department Head

The data are organized according to the five areas of investigation and their associated sub-problems.

Role and Relationships

All English department heads saw their role as multi-faceted with responsibilities encompassing instructional to administrative concerns. Most department heads received their job descriptions from their administrators. Constraints which hindered the effectiveness of their headship included time, paperwork, lack of

money, low teacher morale, prioritizing tasks, stress associated with the position and lack of training for the job.

Curriculum and Program Development

Participants mentioned a variety of methods for carrying out the actual planning in their department but all involved some form of group work. All department heads were involved in the coordination of teaching efforts in some way.

Personnel

Most department heads felt that they had some influence on the staff in their department. While there was a variety of methods for exerting influence, leading by example was the most popular. Half of the department heads were involved in doing formative evaluation. One quarter were involved in the summative evaluation process. No one felt that they played a major role in the teacher in-service process.

Students

Involvement with students included the role of ombudsman and student evaluator.

Resources

Most of the department heads felt that they were involved in the creation of the budget at the school level. They also felt that the budget for their department should be developed by concensus.

In reference to materials in the resource centre, the most common methods were the use of catalogues and meeting with publishers' representatives.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first includes the purpose of the study, a re-statement of the problems, the instrumentation, the research methodology and the respondent group. A review of major findings is presented in the second section. The third section discusses conclusions drawn from the findings and implications of this study.

Summary

Purpose of the Study

This study attempted to provide a profile of the role of the senior high English department head as it is perceived by the teachers who fill that role in one school district in Alberta.

Problem

The study was divided into five main areas of investigation and each of these contained a number of sub-problems. They were as follows:

1. Role And Relationships
   - 1.1 How did teachers who filled the position summarize their role as English Department Head?
   - 1.2 What were the primary responsibilities English Department Heads listed for their position?
   - 1.3 As Department Head, what was the working relationship with the Principal and Assistant Principal(s).

1.4 To what extent were Department Heads involved with community relations?

1.5 What was the most serious continuing obstacle English Department Heads faced in their efforts to be effective in their position?

2. Curriculum/Program Development

2.1 How do Department Heads work with teachers in planning?

2.2 What is the role of Department Heads regarding the coordination of teaching?

3. Personnel

3.1 How did department heads influence the teachers in the English department?

3.2 How did department heads encourage the teachers in the English department to do periodic self-evaluation?

3.3 Did the duties of department heads include formative evaluation of the teachers in the English department?

3.4 Did the duties of department heads include summative evaluation of the teachers in the English department?

3.5 What was the role of department heads with regard to in-service opportunities for the staff of the English department?

4. Students

4.1 What was the role of department heads with regard to students?

4.2 What was the role of department heads regarding the coordination of the evaluation of student performance within the English department?

5. Resources

5.1 To what extent were department heads involved in budget development at the school level?

5.2 How did department heads develop the budget for the English department?

5.3 What was the role of department heads with regard to the materials in the resource centre of the English department?

Sample

Participants in this study were all employed by a single, large school district in the province of Alberta.

Following permission from their employer, all fourteen department heads in the district were contacted by letter. The letter described the nature of the study, outlined the role that would be played by the participants and sought permission to tape their responses. Twelve of the department heads agreed to participate in the study and two declined.

Instrumentation

The instrument used to collect the data was based on the Effective Schools Research Questionnaire used by Jones in 1988. This instrument consisted of two parts. The first part was a

questionnaire which was designed to collect demographic information.

The second part of the instrument was a semi-structured interview based on the five problems identified in the statement of the problem. The questions asked by the interviewer were written down to ensure that each of the participants was asked the same questions, but the structure was not so rigid that it precluded following up on points that arose during the course of the interview.

A journal was kept by the interviewer to ensure that important thoughts and impressions were not lost. This journal was updated after each interview.

Collection of Data

Completion of the questionnaire and the interview occurred on a single occasion for each of the department heads. Appointments were made to meet with each of the participants at a time that was convenient to them. Interviews were generally conducted in the school in which the department head was employed, either during school or after final dismissal. In one case, a department head was interviewed in the evening at home.

Interviews lasted from one to two hours. Each was taped to ensure that no errors or omissions occurred during analysis.

Analysis of the Data

Each of the interviews was transcribed and coded to identify major topic areas discussed. The data were then reorganized on the basis of topic area. This allowed all the responses dealing with a

particular point to be analyzed for patterns, similarities, differences or the absence of commonality.

Review of Major Findings

This section summarizes the major findings as they apply to each of the problems.

Role and Relationship

1.1 How did teachers who filled the position summarize their role as English department head?

The majority of the English department heads saw themselves as facilitators, helping to get things done in one way or another. Some department heads saw themselves acting as the intermediary between the administration and the teachers.

1.2 What were the primary responsibilities English department heads listed for their position?

All respondents perceived their role to be multi-faceted ranging from curricular matters such as timetables to administrative duties such as budget.

Most English department heads received their job descriptions from their administrators.

1.3 As department head, what is the working relationship with the principal and assistant principal(s)?

Although department heads admitted that conflict did exist, all respondents described their relationships with administrators in positive terms due, they felt, to mutual respect and trust.

1.4 To what extent were department heads involved with community relations?

The responses to this question ranged from little or no involvement to quite involved. Again, it varied according to administrative procedures within particular schools.

1.5 What was the most serious continuing obstacle English department heads faced in their efforts to be effective in their position?

Serious obstacles marring effectiveness varied. Two respondents mentioned lack of time. Two more identified paperwork. Other obstacles cited were budget constraints, constraints imposed from outside the department and low teacher morale.

Curriculum and Program Development

2.1 How do department heads work with teachers in planning?

The consensus of all department heads was that planning had to be carried out by the department as a whole. The majority of English department heads favored common course outlines and common expectations while allowing teachers to plan the specific delivery

of courses. A number of different methods of carrying out the actual planning were outlined during the course of the study, but planning of courses also had to take into account the limited variety of available resources.

2.2 What is the role of department heads regarding the coordination of teaching?

Common assignments, common exams and common marking, often using the grade 12 diploma examination formula and marking procedure were popular methods of ensuring that all courses ended up in approximately the same place. It appeared that the final examination set the parameters for the course.

Personnel

3.1 How did the department head influence the teachers in the English department?

All department heads believed their influence worked (when it worked) in a variety of ways. Most felt that leading by example (both within and beyond the bounds of the classroom) was the most effective method of influence. There were those English department heads who saw themselves exerting their greatest influence in the role of consultant. Responses seemed to indicate that all the different methods which were outlined by department heads were to some extent interdependent, and that no single, identifiable method was used alone or exclusively.

3.2 How did department heads encourage the teachers in the English department to do periodic self-evaluation?

Most English department heads felt that the impetus for self-evaluation came with the knowledge that other teachers would be looking at the quality of their work through the common marking of student assignments. However, four English department heads considered self-evaluation to be part of their teacher performance reviews. Three department heads said that they gave "subtle hints."

3.3 Did the duties of department heads include formative evaluation of the teachers in the English department?

Half of the department heads indicated that they did perform formative evaluations because it was part of their job description. A variety of evaluation techniques was used.

3.4 Did the duties of department heads include summative evaluation of the teachers in the English department?

Nine of the twelve English department heads indicated that they were not involved in formal summative evaluation. Several department heads indicated that this was an area of conflict.

3.5 What was the role of department heads with regard to in-service opportunities for the staff of the English department?

The department heads surveyed indicated that they had a very small role with regard to in-service opportunities for their staff.

Students

4.1 What was the role of department heads with regard to students?

Most department heads felt they played an active role with regard to students and offered a wide range of responses. However, most answers could be categorized as "student ombudsman." Many seemed to feel that their roles ran heavily to settling disputes and making decisions. Some department heads indicated that they had a very low level of involvement beyond the scope of teaching.

4.2 What was the role of department heads regarding the coordination of the evaluation of student performance within the English department?

All department heads indicated a variety of techniques were used to ensure that student evaluations were fair and consistent. Examples included double marking or exchanging papers for marking, common exams and the common marking of exams. One department head mentioned that teachers' marks were examined during the course of the year.

Resources

5.1 To what extent were department heads involved in budget development at the school level?

The majority of department heads felt that they were fairly heavily involved in the creation of the budget at the school level. Most

processes involved the presentation of some sort of a budget document to the administration. Some department heads felt that since a great deal of a school's budget was virtually pre-spent, they had little influence in reality.

5.2 How did department heads develop the budget for the English department?

One department head said that his teachers did not concern themselves with the budget. Other department heads indicated that setting the budget of the English department was a matter of consensus even though the process varied from school to school.

5.3 What was the role of department heads with regard to the materials in the resource centre of the English department?

The most common methods used by English department heads to add to their collection of reference and resource material was the use of catalogues and communicating with publishers' representatives. Student teachers and university staff, with their access to curriculum libraries, were also mentioned as sources of new material.

Description and Analysis of Findings

The purpose of this section is to compare the findings of this study to the literature which was reviewed in association with this study.

Role and Relationship

The findings suggest that while the role of the English department head is multi-faceted, the majority of the participants in this study saw themselves primarily as facilitators. The wide variety of role descriptors which appeared in the literature was consistent with the English department heads' perception that their role was multi-faceted. The literature suggested that there were more aspects of the position than were being addressed by the department heads in this study.

Relationships with administration were reported to be, on the whole, positive. Department heads felt that they had reasonable access to and open communication with their respective administrators. The literature reflects the importance of this relationship, particularly as it relates to instructional leadership. As Callahan (1971) stated ". . . the department head, occupying a position which links administration and teachers, plays a vital role in the operation of [the] school." (pp. 24-25)

Depending upon the school, the English department heads were involved in their respective communities in varying degrees. While this is in keeping with Early and Fletcher-Campbell's recommendation that the role of the department head must be seen within the context of the community, there is little support in the literature for this position. The inconsistency reported by department heads with regard to their involvement in the community echoes Hord and Murphy (1985) who stated

> The most appropriate characterization of the department head role is its inconsistency in the way it is operationalized

> across heads within a school, within a district, and across all the districts we have studied. (p. 8)

Lack of time, too much paperwork, budgetary concerns and constraints both from within and without, appeared to be the most serious obstacles hampering the effectiveness of the department head. The literature illustrated that lack of role definition was a major factor in the effectiveness of department heads. It also suggests that the effectiveness of the department head is closely related to the principal's expectations.

Curriculum and Program Development

The findings of the study indicated department heads saw the planning process within their department as a group effort. Once planning was completed and departmental goals and guidelines had been established, department heads encouraged their staff to use their own methods to achieve the desired results. Torrington and Weightman (1989) support this management technique by stating

> The new [principal] has been trying to open the minds of his heads of department to the need to manage staff as well as organize and administer departmental resources. He (sic) has also encouraged them to take initiatives rather than orders and plan in terms of collaborating teams. . . . (p. 167)

Personnel

The respondents felt that leading by example was the most effective method of influencing other members of their department. Concern was expressed as to the degree of influence which could be exercised with the department. Leithwood and MacLean (1987) suggested that the most effective department heads attempt to

influence as many factors within their department as they can. Hall and Guzman (1984) point to a link between the effectiveness of department heads and the expectations placed on them by their administrators saying ". . . the primary key to department heads being effective change facilitators appears to be related to how the principal defines their role. . . . If principals have higher expectations, then the department heads seem more as level managers" (p. 12).

The study showed disagreement as to whether or not department heads should perform formative evaluations and summative evaluations. Half of the respondents participated in the process of formative evaluation while only one quarter of them were involved in summative evaluation. This conflict reflected the literature insofar as Marland (1981) did not include the evaluation of teaching staff in his list of duties for the department heads while Sergiovanni (1977) feels that the evaluation of teachers is a duty for the department head. Knox et al. (1977) agreed with Sergiovanni and listed 'evaluation of teaching performance' as one of the duties of the department head.

Students

The study indicated that most department heads felt they played an active role with regard to students, particularly as student ombudsman and as overseer of the student evaluation process. The literature makes little reference to the role of the department head as it relates to students. Marland (1981) stated that the department head should "Oversee the work of the pupils,

from the monitoring of their progress through disciplining and encouraging to reporting" (p. 2). Neville (1990) stated that the department head should be approachable by staff, parents and pupils (p. 4).

Resources

The results of the study showed that department heads had input with regard to the creation of a school budget document. Concerns were voiced that because a large portion of a school's budget was pre-spent, their actual influence was questionable. The literature made little reference to the financial aspect of the role of the department head. Sergiovanni (1977) indicated that the department head should be responsible for submitting budget requests (pp. 12-13). Marland (1981) went a step further and stated that the department head "Should manage the finances, physical resources and learning material efficiently" (p. 2).

Conclusions

This section presents the conclusions reached from the data collected in this study.

It is apparent that the role of the English department head lacks definition. The expectations placed on each department head varied from school to school within the district. Some department heads indicated that they would not perform duties which others claimed were part of their job description.

Although department heads indicated that they had positive relationships with their administrators, none indicated that the relationship involved in-depth discussions with regard to curriculum or instruction. This seems to indicate that principals are not making full use of department heads in their efforts to act as instructional leaders.

It is apparent that the grade 12 diploma examination exerts considerable influence on the instruction and evaluation of students within the English department.

English department heads are not comfortable with their role in teacher evaluation. The majority of the department heads were willing to perform formative evaluation however, these were carried out in a variety of ways. Few department heads were involved in summative evaluation. Some felt that as department head, they were in the best position to do a fair and accurate job. The concern was expressed that doing summative evaluations could destroy the atmosphere of collegiality within the department.

Department heads felt that in-service opportunities for teachers were a low priority within the district. None felt they played a major role in the teacher in-service process and several indicated that funding was sometimes a problem.

The budget formation process within the English department is not carried out in a uniform manner within the district. While most English department heads involve their staff members in the process, others state that the members of their staff do not care about the budget and are not involved.

Recommendations

1. The job description of the English department head requires clarification. This could help ensure that all concerned parties were aware of the duties and responsibilities of an English department head. This awareness may help create some uniformity in the operation of English departments within the district.
2. Training for teachers asked to fulfill the role of English department head may help them perform their duties more effectively and therefore enhance the operation of the English department.
3. The English department head should take steps to ensure that the grade 12 diploma examination does not replace the curriculum.
4. Steps should be taken to review the process by which the budget for each English department within the district is generated and allocated with a view to increasing participation in the decision making.
5. Raising the profile of in-service opportunities for English teachers could assist in maintaining a high quality of instruction within the district.
6. Efforts should be made to maintain the resource centre of each English department above a pre-determined level which would be the minimum amount of resources with which the department can function.

Implications for Further Study

1. A study could be conducted to determine the effect of a variety of variables on the role of the English department head. For example, do the department heads in larger schools function more as administrators than their counterparts in smaller schools?
2. Further work could be done to compare the results of this study to those obtained from studies of department heads in other subject areas.
3. A study could be conducted to investigate the perceptions of principals and/or teachers of the role of the department head. Since the literature has revealed the importance of the principal with regard to the effectiveness of department heads, it could be useful to understand more about how they view the role of English department head.
4. A survey of teachers in schools within a district which has eliminated the position of department head may reveal further information regarding the importance of this position.
5. A survey across districts could be conducted to compare roles under different jurisdictions.
6. A survey could investigate the lived experiences of department heads which would explore more of the ongoing issues not raised in this study.

APPENDIX

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bayne-Jardine, C. (1981). The qualities of a good head of department. In Marland, M., & Hill, S. (Eds). Departmental management (pp. 37-41). London, England. Heinmann Educational Books.

Best, R., Jarvis, C. & Ribbins, P. (1977). Pastoral care: Concept and process. In Glatter, R., Preedy, M., Riches, C., & Masterson, M. (Eds). (1988). Understanding school management. Philadelphia. Open University Press.

Best, R., Jarvis, C. & Ribbins, P. (1980). Perspectives on pastoral care. In Glatter, R., Preedy, M., Riches, C., & Masterson, M. (Eds). (1988). Understanding school management. Philadelphia. Open University Press.

Best, R., Jarvis, C. & Ribbins, P. with Oddy, D. (1983). Education and care. In Glatter, R., Preedy, M., Riches, C., & Masterson, M. (Eds). (1988). Understanding school management. Philadelphia. Open University Press.

Best, R. & Ribbins, P. (1983). Rethinking the pastoral academic split. In Glatter, R., Preedy, M., Riches, C., & Masterson, M. (Eds). (1988). Understanding school management. Philadelphia. Open University Press.

Callahan, M. G. (1971). The effective school department head. West Nyack, New York. Parker Publishing.

Clark, A. (1969). The department head in the high schools of Alberta. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta.

Dunham, J. (1978). Change and stress in the head of department's role. In Glatter, R., Preedy, M., Riches, C., & Masterson, M. (Eds). (1988). Understanding school management. Philadelphia. Open University Press.

Early, P., & Fletcher-Campbell, F. (1989). The time to manage?: Department and faculty heads at work. Berkshire, England. National Foundation for Educational Research.

Easterday, K. (1965). The department chairman: What are his duties and qualifications? In Clark, A. (1969). The department head in the high schools of Alberta. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta.

Edwards, R. (1987). Departmental organization and management. In Early, Peter., & Fletcher-Campbell, F. (1989). The time to manage?: Department and faculty heads at work. Berkshire, England. National Foundation for Educational Research.

Fitzgerald, R. T. (1970). The secondary school at sixes and sevens. Port Melbourne, Australia. Australian Council for Educational Research.

Glatter, R., Preedy, M., Riches, C., & Masterson, M. (Eds). (1988). Understanding school management. Philadelphia. Open University Press.

Goodlad, J. (1984). A place called school: Prospects for the future. In Jones, P. (1988). How can secondary school principals influence student achievement? Canadian Administrator. 27(6). 7-8.

Gray, D. A. (1972). The role of the department head in Ottawa high schools. Unpublished masters' thesis, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta.

Hall, G. E. & Guzman, F. M. (1984). Sources of leadership for change in high schools. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Hord, S. M. (1984). Facilitating change in high schools myths and management. Unpublished manuscript. Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, Austin, Texas.

Hord, S. M. & Diaz-Ortiz, E. M. (1986). Beyond the principal: Can the department head supply leadership for change in high schools? Paper presented at the International Research Seminar on Internal Change Facilitators, Belgium.

Hord, S. M. & Murphy, S. C. (1985). The high school department head: Powerful or powerless in guiding change? Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, Ill.

Hughes, M. G. (Ed.). (1974). Secondary school administration: A management approach (2nd ed.). Toronto. Pergamon of Canada, Ltd.

Jensen, L. (1949). Department chairman: Why he often quits with pleasure. In Clark, A. (1969). The department head in the high schools of Alberta. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta.

Jones, P. (1988). How can secondary school principals influence student achievement? Canadian Administrator. 27(6). 7-8.

Jones, J. J., Salisbury, C. J. & Spencer, R. L. (1969). Secondary school administration. In Neagley, R. L. & Evans, N. D. (1980). Handbook for effective supervision of education. 3rd ed. New Jersey. Prentice-Hall Inc.

Knox, W. G., Laird, W. K., & Vichert, N. N. (1977). Power or pawn: Leadership and the department head. Ontario. Professional Development Committee of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation.

Lambert, K. (1975). Research report: The role of head of department in schools. In Glatter, R., Preedy, M., Riches, C., & Masterson, M. (Eds). (1988). Understanding school management. Philadelphia. Open University Press.

Leithwood, K. A. & McLean, J. (1987). The effective department head. Canadian School Executive. 7(5). 32-35.

Louis, K. S. (1986). Reforming secondary schools: A critique and an agenda for administrators. In Leithwood, K. A. & McLean, J. (1987). The effective department head. Canadian School Executive. 7(5). 32-35.

Marcial, G. E. (1984). Department supervisors: Are they line or staff administrators? In Hord, S.M. & Murphy, S.C. (1985). The high school department head: Powerful or powerless in guiding change? Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, Ill.

Marland, M., & Hill, S. (Eds). (1981). Departmental management. London, England. Heinmann Educational Books.

McCartney, C. & Schrag, F. (1990). Departmental and school leadership in promoting higher order thinking. Journal of Curriculum Studies. 22. 529-543.

Neagley, R. L. & Evans, N. D. (1980). Handbook for effective supervision of education. 3rd ed. New Jersey. Prentice-Hall Inc.

Neville, T. (1990). A departmental review. Head Teachers Review. Spring, 1990. p. 4.

Phipson, G. (1981). Head of the department and the school. In Marland, M., & Hill, S. (Eds). Departmental management (pp. 25-36). London, England. Heinmann Educational Books.

Rallis, S. & Highsmith, M. (1986(. The myth of the 'great principal': Questions of school management and instructional leadership. In Jones, P. (1988). How can secondary school principals influence student achievement? Canadian Administrator. 27(6). 7-8.

Ribbins, P. (1988). The role of the middle manager in the secondary school. In Glatter, R., Preedy, M., Riches, C., & Masterson, M. (Eds). Understanding school management (pp. 58-77). Philadelphia. Open University Press.

Rinker, F. (1950). The department head. In Clark, A. (1969). The department head in the high schools of Alberta. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta.

Sergiovanni, T. (1977). Handbook for effective department leadership: Concept's and practices in today's secondary schools. In Yanitski, N. W. (1988). Secondary in-school coordinators. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta.

Sergiovanni, T. (1984). Effective department leadership. In Hord, S.M. & Murphy, S.C. (1985). The high school department head: Powerful or powerless in guiding change? Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, Ill.

Siddle, J. (1978). The head of science and the task of management. In Glatter, R., Preedy, M., Riches, C., & Masterson, M. (Eds). (1988). Understanding school management. Philadelphia. Open University Press.

Thomas, H. (1983). Review of Marland and Hill (1981) Department management. In Glatter, R., Preedy, M., Riches, C., & Masterson, M. (Eds). (1988). Understanding school management. Philadelphia. Open University Press.

Torrington, D. & Weightman, J. (1989). The reality of school management. Oxford, England. Basil Blackwell Ltd.

Waltham, A. (1961). A high school department head views supervision. In Clark, A. (1969). The department head in the high schools of Alberta. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta.

Yanitski, N. W. (1988). Secondary in-school coordinators. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta.

THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT HEAD
IN
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

1. Name: School:

2. Sex:

Male
Female

3. (a) How many periods during the day do you teach?

(b) Are you provided with release time from the classroom to carry out the designated duties of department head? (Do not include normal classroom preparation time.)

Yes
No

(c) If the answer to question 'b' was 'yes', please indicate the approximate number of minutes per day that you are released from the classroom to carry out you designated duties as department head. (Do not include normal classroom preparation time.)

Less than 30 minutes per day
From 30 to 60 minutes per day
From 60 to 90 minutes per day
From 90 to 120 minutes per day
Other (please specify)

4. Age:

Under 21 years
21-30 years
31-40 years
41-50 years
51-60 years
Over 60 years

5. Professional Training: (indicate all applicable answers)

   Teacher training college
   Bachelor's degree in a faculty other than education
   Bachelor of Education degree
   Graduate Diploma in Education
   Master's degree in a faculty other than education
   Master of Education degree
   Ph. D. or Ed. D.
   Other (please specify)

6. Total number of years of teaching experience (Include years of administrative experience):

7. Total number of years of administrative experience as a department head in schools:

8. Total number of years of teaching experience in senior high school (Include administrative experience):

9. Total number of years of experience in your present high school (Include administrative experience):

10. For how many years have you been designated as the English department head in this school or other schools?

11. What is the total number of teachers in the English department:

12. (a) Are you provided with clerical help to assist you in your duties as department head?

    Yes
    No

    (b) If yes, what is the extent of this assistance?

13. What is the average number of subject department meetings convened by you as department head during a semester?

No meetings
One meeting
2-4 meetings
More than 4 meetings

14. What is the organization of the instructional program of your present high school?

Ten month school year
Two semester school year
Trimester school year
Other (please specify)

15. Please list FIVE SPECIFIC DUTIES OR TASKS, performed by you in the past school day, which had been assigned to you because of your designated position as English department head.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

16. (a) Have you had any specific training related to your position of department head?

(b) If yes, what was this training?

THE ROLE OF THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT HEAD IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

Role and Relationship

1. What is your perception of you role as English department head?

2. What are your three primary responsibilities as English department head?

3. As department head, please describe your working relationships with the Principal and Assistant Principal(s).

4. In your role of English department head, to what extent are you involved in community relations?

Curriculum/Program Development

1. How do you work with you teachers to plan the courses for your department?

2. What is your role regarding the coordination of the teaching efforts of your staff?

Personnel

1. How do you influence the teachers in the English department?

2. How do you encourage the teachers in the English department to periodically conduct self-evaluation?

3. Do your duties include formative evaluation of the teachers in your department?

3a. If yes, how do you carry this out?

4. Do your duties include summative evaluation of the teachers in your department?

4a. If yes, how do you carry this out?

5. What is your role with regard to in-service opportunities for your staff?

Students

1. What is your role with regard to students?

2. What is your role regarding the coordination of performance evaluation of students in your classroom?

Resources

1. To what extent are you involved in budget development at the school level?

2. How do you develop the budget for the English department?

3. How do you work to improve and extend the materials in your resource centre?

Summary

1. Would you briefly summarize your role as English department head?

2. what are the most serious continuing obstacles you face in your efforts to be an effective English department head?

3. Is there anything else upon which you wish to comment?